



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

AN EXCURSION THROUGH NORTH WALES*.

His path is 'mid the Cambrian mountains wild ;
 The many fountains, that, well-wandering down
 Plinlimmon's huge rough side, their murmurs smooth
 Float round him: Idris, that, like warrior old,
 His battened and fantastic helmet rears,
 Scattering the elements' wrath, frowns o'er his way,
 A broad irregular duskiness. Aloof,
 Snowdon, the triple-headed giant, soars,
 Clouds rolling half-way down his rugged sides.

MILLMAN'S SAMOR.

A modern writer has needlessly divided the idle people, as he calls them, who wander abroad during the summer season into six classes, namely, Idle Travellers, Lying Travellers, Proud Travellers, Vain Travellers, Splenetic Travellers, and Inquisitive Travellers; forgetting that in this classification he applies to himself one of these reproachful epithets, for he also was a traveller, and makes no reservation in his own favour. But he is, surely, too harsh and satirical. All travellers are not actuated by motives so worthless as those thus churlishly implied. There are many individuals whose minds, finely formed and improved by education, and endowed with a natural thirst after knowledge, lead them forth in search of that invigorating instruction which they cannot acquire at home, and which, while it affords them unceasing amusement, teaches them at the same time the full value of human power and capability.

Travelling, moreover, improves the mind wonderfully;—it expands and strengthens the faculties infinitely more than all the dry and dusty learning of the schools, and implants in our hearts that genuine benevolence and virtue, which induces us feelingly to sympathise with, and relieve, the miseries of our fellow-creatures; it imbues us with the perfect consciousness of our dependence upon others, and teaches us to value all those blessings which we enjoy, with a firm and grateful reliance on the decrees of Providence.

But I do not mean by this to arrogate to myself the virtues,

* This Excursion, to use the words of our Correspondent, "comprises a description of the most remarkable scenes in Carnarvonshire, and is interspersed with several characteristic historical sketches."—ED.

which I have thus enumerated—far from it. The motive, which induced me to wander forth amid the wild hills of the Principality, was one of the most common and natural to man, an earnest desire of seeing two or three old and valued friends in Carnarvonshire, whose pressing invitations I had for a long time resisted,—and of surveying, at the same time, some of the most interesting scenes in that romantic and secluded part of the kingdom. Finding, then, that my professional avocations would permit me to absent myself for a month or two from the metropolis, I left London, in company with my friend D—, about the middle of last April, having previously arranged to proceed *per coach* to Shrewsbury, from thence on foot to the little town of Corwen, in Merionethshire, to meet the Holyhead coach, which would convey us towards Carnarvon, where we purposed to quarter ourselves with my friend Mr. G—, in order that we might visit the many beautiful scenes and interesting objects in its vicinity. Having made this arrangement, we secured two places for Saturday the 14th of April, in the Union post-coach, which leaves the Bull-and-Mouth every afternoon at three precisely, and arrives at Shrewsbury between five and six the following evening.

We were fortunate enough to have fine weather for our journey—a little dull and cloudy at first—but beautifully calm and clear during the night, with a bright moon, and a cool invigorating breeze. To add to our comfort—for D. and I are really so gothic as to believe that comfort may be found, if one be disposed to find it, even in a stage-coach—our fellow-travelers, (a very genteel, and rather lively young lady, with a hearty, well-informed, old gentleman, her father) were very agreeable, very polite, and very good-humoured. Thus circumstanced, we went smoothly and merrily on our way, and did not once regret that we had ventured on a journey of 160 miles in a vehicle, which a facetious friend has emphatically denominated Mr. Willan's Patent Peril Coach*. Nay, to speak candidly, we prefer, in many respects, the animating bustle of the stage-coach to the hum-drum quietude of the post-

* In opposition, I presume, to the Patent Safety Coaches, not long since invented by Mr. Mathews, of Islington. I can only assign one reasonable motive for this appalling denomination, and that is, the rash and unwise manner in which most of the coaches on the great western road are loaded. This ought to be looked to and remedied.

chaise. For expedition, and that too with comparative comfort and convenience, there can be no comparison; and, when the company is agreeable, and the driver civil and attentive, the stage is decidedly our favourite.

The post-chaise, indeed, as Mr. Leigh Hunt has observed, is "home in motion*;" but the smooth running along the road—the fresh air—the variety of scene—the leafy grounds—the bursting prospects—the clatter through a town—the gaping gaze of the village—and the hearty appetite—which he has considered as peculiar to the chaise, are equally, if not more, applicable to the coach; a journey in which certainly "puts the animal spirits at work, and throws an inspiring novelty over the weary road of life." Besides, to unshackled bachelors, like my friend and me, who delight above all things in the contemplation of men and manners, the stage-coach possesses an attraction by the very variety and combination of character which it brings together. But it has other advantages, neither few nor unimportant; for, (to borrow the words of the pleasing writer already quoted), "it is a very great and unpretending accommodation: it is also a cheap substitute, notwithstanding all its eighteen-penny and two-and-sixpenny temptations, for keeping a carriage, or a horse; and, I really think, in spite of its gossiping, that it is no mean help to village liberality; for its passengers are so mixed, so often varied, so little, yet so much together, so compelled to accommodate, so willing, generally, to pass a short time pleasantly, and so liable to the criticism of strangers, that it is hard if they do not acquire a habit of speaking—and even of thinking—more kindly of one another, than if they mingled less often, or under other and more formal circumstances.

In short, the company of a stage-coach always reminds me of what Dr. Paley † has termed "the equality of the human species." The commingling of rich and poor does undoubtedly promote humility and condescension in the higher orders of the community, and inspire the lower with a just and proper estimate of their rights. The distinctions of civil life are almost always too much, and too peremptorily, insisted upon, and fre-

* See his *Indicator*, the discontinuance of which is most seriously to be regretted by all the lovers of literature.

† Moral Philosophy, Book v. chap. 4.

quently urged too far. Whatever, therefore, conduces to restore the the natural level, by qualifying the disposition, which grows out of great elevation or depression of rank, improves the character on both sides. Having thus, I hope, successfully vindicated my partiality for stage-coaches, I will resume my narrative.

We reached Oxford about two A. M., and nothing can surpass the beauty of the scene, as the pale moon-beams rested on the venerable walls of the colleges in the High-street, shedding a mild and mellow light upon their antique turrets.

How beautiful on yonder time-worn towers
 The mild moon gazes ! Mark,
 With what a lovely and majestic step
 She treads along the heavens !
 And, oh ! how soft, how silently she pours
 Her chastened radiance on the scene around ;
 And hill, and dale, and tower
 Drink the pure flood of light.
 Roll on, roll on, queen of the midnight hour,
 For ever beautiful.

I never visit Oxford,—that vast and ancient depository of human learning—that “sacred nursery of blooming youth,” as Wordsworth terms it,—without experiencing a kind of pleasureable awe altogether indescribable. There is so lofty an association—so pure and elevated a pleasure, in the recollection of the many mighty scholars and exalted characters, which it has from the earliest ages poured forth to instruct and enlighten the world, that a Briton must derive a proud and powerful gratification from the remembrance of all the worth and all the piety which Oxford has produced. As we drove down through the town in the still hour of midnight, the reposing tranquillity and deep silence, which invested the city, communicated a feeling of almost breathless awe, which was yet further augmented by occasional glimpses of the dark and frowning battlements of the colleges. But the grovelling mind of our accomplished charioteer experienced no delight in a scene so calm and beautiful. Unfurling the long lash of his whip, he smacked it loudly and triumphantly as he ascended Magdalen-bridge, and our vehicle rolled rapidly on towards Birmingham.

We arrived at Shrewsbury about five o'clock on Sunday afternoon, and were very forcibly struck with the extreme beauty of its approach from the great London road. As we drove over the English Bridge, the sun seemed resting his glowing disk upon a ridge of blue mountains, emerging, as it were, from the far-distant horizon; while his departing rays fell full upon the dark waters of the Severn like a column of living gold. Far as the eye could reach, towards the west, was seen the bold and undulating outline of the Welsh hills, wrapped in misty vapour, through which the setting sun gleamed ruddily, illuminating the spires of one or two of the old churches with a portion of his own bright glory. But we were soon in the midst of the antique buildings of the town, and shortly found ourselves in the yard of the Lion, a large respectable inn, with very good accommodations.

After a hasty dinner, which we seasoned with some capital sherry, D—— and I strolled out in the cool of the evening to view the town, and refresh ourselves after our journey. The church and chapel bells were chiming to evening prayers as we walked forth, and, having reached St. Alkmund's, we entered, and remained during the service. This church is remarkable for the great beauty of its spire, and for an exquisitely painted window, by the celebrated Egginton, of Handsworth, near Birmingham. The subject is Faith, with the motto—"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." There was still sufficient light remaining to enable us to see distinctly this admirable specimen of Mr. Egginton's powers. A beautiful female figure, kneeling on a cross and extending her hands towards heaven, represents Faith, and the delicate expression of mingled adoration and meekness, depicted on her countenance, is indeed admirable. The drapery is in unison with the figure—neither glaringly coloured nor exaggeratedly designed. In short, there is a chastened purity about the whole, which I have never seen excelled, nor, indeed, equalled, if we except a specimen or two of the performance of Mr. Backler, of Newman-street.

There is a curious tradition relative to this church, by which we learn that, in the year 1552, no less a personage than his satanic majesty honoured it with a visit during the celebration of high mass! The town was wrapped in gloom, and the ele-

ments, as is customary on these occasions, were fearfully agitated at the unsolicited presence of the Prince of Darkness.

The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes ;
The goats ran from the mountains, and the herds
Were strangely clamorous to the frightened fields.

He passed through the church, and ascended the spire, maliciously damaging the clock-machinery in his progress, and attempting to clutch one of the bells, which he would doubtless have carried off as a trophy of his expedition, had it not, according to the usage of the times, been happily consecrated, thereby resisting the effort made for its removal by one so unhallowed: it retained, however, a deep impression of the *ungues diabolici*. It is furthermore maintained, that on this memorable occasion the evil one appeared under the similitude of a Grey Friar! But, whether he bestrode one of Mr. Southey's high-trotting horses*, a hippogriff, or a broom-stick, tradition saith not.

Shrewsbury has every appearance of an old town. There is a sober air of sombre antiquity about most of the houses, which contrast very agreeably with the more elegant modern buildings, and there is a charming simplicity about the lower orders of the inhabitants (for the gentry of Salopia have been celebrated for their pomposity from time immemorial), which accords well with their remoteness from the metropolis, and presents a gratifying spectacle to one, whose life has been passed amidst the turmoil and sophistication of the great city.

As we wished to enter Wales with the loss of as little time as possible, we returned to the inn after a short stroll long the Quarry, and arranged respecting our progress through the Principality. We had originally intended to walk from Shrewsbury to Oswestry, a distance of eighteen miles; but we discovered, upon inquiry, that we should find nothing to repay us for the toil of our walk. We, therefore, ordered a post-chaise (there being no public conveyance on that road at a convenient hour) to be at the door at nine the next morning to convey us thither. We were advised to deviate a little from our proposed route, and visit Rhiwabon and Wrexham from Oswestry, instead of proceeding directly to Llangollen and Corwen; a plan we readily adopted, as will be seen in the sequel.

* See the "Old Woman of Berkeley," a ballad, by R. Southey, Esq.

We reached Oswestry a little after one o'clock, and found, at the Cross Foxes, all that a traveller can reasonably expect at an inn, more especially when it is situated on the Welsh borders *. Nay, we were somewhat surprised to find accommodations so superior at a place so retired; and the civility of our host and his attendants was commensurate with the excellency of the fare we fed upon.

Oswestry was one of the chief border towns on the Welsh frontier, and probably witnessed more of the barbarous and sanguinary ferocity of the rough mountaineers in the times of old, than any other town in England. Being also one of the principal manors of the Marches of Wales, its inhabitants, during that gloomy period which intervened between the Conquest and the Union of the Principality, were in a state of continual peril from the wild and daring incursions of the Welsh borderers. And, even long subsequent to the Union, the Oswestrians and their contumacious neighbours, actuated by that terrible enmity, which burnt so long unquenched between them, took every opportunity of harassing and plundering one another. Nay, this system of mutual robbery and rapine became generally prevalent, in a greater or less degree, throughout the whole extent of the Marches; and it appears to have continued without any material interruption to a comparatively late period. Indeed, the merciless laws, enacted against the Welsh, after the conquest of their country, and the unendurable oppression, which the Lords Marches so freely exercised, were not calculated to allay the proud and impetuous animosity of the mountaineers. To expect mildness and courtesy from those, to whom no mildness or courtesy was shewn, were futile and ridiculous: the Indian might as justly look for tameness and submission from the roused and irritated lion. Thus circumstanced, both parties considered, as goods lawfully obtained, every thing which they could seize in each other's territory: they, therefore, took such precautions on both sides, as were most conducive to the preservation of their property. The dwellings of the English were surrounded by

* We need not apologize, we are sure, to our worthy Correspondent for observing, that we are not precisely aware, why an inn on the "Welsh borders" may not be expected to furnish accommodations equal to those of an inn in any other situation.—ED.

moats, and defended by palisadoes, and their cattle was driven every night into the fence thus constructed. For the intimidation of their predatory opponents, a gallows was erected in every frontier manor, and, if any Welshman was luckless enough to be captured beyond the line of demarcation, he was immediately hanged on the said gallows, and there suspended *in terrorem*, till another prisoner was ready to supply his place. Every town within the Marches had, also, a horseman, ready equipped "with a sword and spear," who was maintained for the express purpose of apprehending these marauders. On the other hand, the Welsh trusted for their defence to the intricacies of their deep woods, and to the ruggedness of their mountain fastnesses; and they put in force the *lex talionis*, whenever opportunity occurred, to its fullest and most rigorous extent.

These contests and robberies were in full vogue so late as the 16th century; and in 1534 the stewards, constables, and lieutenants of Oswestry and Powis castles entered into a compact to endeavour to restrain, in their own districts, these licentious and unruly practices. It was accordingly agreed, that if, after a certain day then appointed, any person of one lordship committed felony in another, he should be arrested, and sent to the lordship, where the offence had been committed, to be duly punished; and that if any goods or cattle were stolen from one lordship, and conveyed into another, the tenants or inhabitants of that lordship should either pay for the same within fifteen days, or otherwise four of their principal men should remain in bail, or mainprize, till the property was paid for, or recovered. It does not appear, however, that the exertions of these officers effectually annihilated these "detestable malefacts," as they were called; for amongst the records of the Drapers' Company at Shrewsbury, there is the following minute:—"25 Elizabeth, anno 1583. Ordered, that no Draper set out for Oswestry on Mondays before six o'clock in the morning, on forfeiture of 6s. 8d.; and that they wear their weapons all the way, and go in company. Not to go over the Welsh-bridge* before the bell toll six." It is further

* This was an old bridge over the Severn at the west entrance to Shrewsbury. It was defended by a tower at each end for the prevention of any attack from the Welshmen. It has been long since demolished, and its place is supplied by a neat modern structure.

stated, that " William Jones, Esq. left to the said Company £1. 6s. 8d., to be paid annually to the Vicar of St. Alkmund's, for reading prayers on Monday mornings before the Drapers set out for Oswestry market*."

In this barbarous and turbulent state did the Welsh continue long before the reign of Henry VIII., although a statute was then enacted, which admitted them to an equal participation of the same privileges as the English themselves enjoyed. This statute, says Mr. Justice Blackstone, in the Introduction to his Commentaries, gave the utmost advancement to their civil prosperity by admitting them to a thorough communication of laws with the people of England. Thus (he continues) were this brave people gradually conquered into the enjoyment of true liberty, being insensibly put upon the same footing, and made fellow-citizens with the conquerors. But many years elapsed before the Welsh reaped the full advantage of this union. They were at first most obstinately averse to the adoption of the milder manners of their conquerors; but the abolition of the severe laws, enacted against them in former reigns, led them to think more favourably of the English, and finally, by associating more amicably with them, to adopt their manners, and imitate their customs. The page of the historian, and the traditions of the country, are now the only proofs of their vindictive enmity towards the English, and nearly all the traces of their fierce hostility are now wiped away from the face of the earth. The Welsh Bridge, with its strong and well-defended towers, is no more; the appalling gibbets are demolished; and all, that remains of Oswestry Castle, is the mound of earth on which it was erected, with a few scattered stones, which once composed its masonry.

The Welsh are now content, amidst the recesses of their secluded hills, with pastimes more gentle and endearing than those which their ancestors revelled in. They are yet, indeed, for the most part—I speak of the peasantry in the remoter districts of North Wales—a rude and unpolished people; but their contumacious turbulence is softened down and transformed into cordial hospitality, and kind but rugged courtesy. But they have not forgotten the martial deeds and valiant exploits

* Bingley's North Wales, vol. ii. p. 103.

of their forefathers—the narration of which, even now, serves to while away the winter's evening in the peasant's cottage.

Such themes inspire the border-shepherd's tale,
When in the gray thatch sounds the fitful gale,
And constant wheels go round with whirling din,
As by red ember light the damsels spin :
Each chaunts by turns the song his soul approves,
Or bears the burthen to the maid he loves.

Still to the surly strain of martial deeds
In cadence soft the dirge of love succeeds,
With tales of ghosts that haunt unhallowed ground,
While narrowing still the circle closes round,
Till, shrinking pale from nameless cause of fear,
Each peasant starts his neighbour's voice to hear

And are not these simple and innocent pastimes a thousand times more gratifying than all the rude and sanguinary heroism of a savage border-chieftain and his clan ?

Like all border towns of any magnitude, Oswestry was defended by a castle ; it was also fortified by four gates *, and a wall. Three of these gates are yet standing, the fourth, with the wall, is destroyed. According to the Welsh historians, the castle was founded in 1148, by Meredydd ab Bleddyn, Prince of Powis ; but the English attribute its erection to Alan, a noble Norman, who came over in the train of the Conquerors. It was a fortress of great strength and extent, and had its *ballium*, or yard—comprehending that part of the town now called the Bailey-head—its *barbican*, or outer-gate, where the poor and maimed were usually relieved, and its chapel, placed at a short distance from the main entrance, and dedicated to St. Nicholas. A curious fact, connected with the history of this castle, illustrates the rude barbarism of the times in rather a

* These are called the Black-gate, (now destroyed) the New-gate, the Willow-gate, and the Beatrice-gate. The last is a handsome building, with a guard-room on both sides, and over it are the arms of the Fitzalans, Earls of Arundel, with a lion-rampant for the crest. It was probably built by Thomas, Earl of Arundel, in the beginning of the reign of Henry IV., who named it in honour of his wife Beatrice, a natural daughter of the king of Portugal. Over the New-gate is the figure of a horse in full speed, with an oaken bough in his mouth. There is a tradition, that this equestrian effigy alludes to the famous breed of horses, for which Powisland was so renowned, and which was derived from some fine Spanish stallions, introduced into this part of the country by Robert de Belesme, Earl of Shrewsbury.—PENNANT, i. 338, 8vo. Edition.

forcible manner. In the year 1214, a complaint was made to the Archbishop of Canterbury by Llywelyn ab Gruffydd ab Madog against the constable of Oswestry castle, *for compelling him to put to death two young noblemen*, in derogation of their high birth and extraction; which disgrace, observes the Welshman, their parents would not have undergone for *three hundred pounds sterling!* He complains also, that the said constable, a despotic worthy in his way, had twice imprisoned sixty of his men, extorting from each ten shillings for his liberty.

It will naturally be supposed, that, situated as Oswestry was, it was exposed to numerous disasters. In 1216, king John ordered it to be plundered and destroyed, because its inhabitants had refused to interfere in his dispute with the barons. It experienced a similar fate in the reign of Henry III. during an incursion of the Welsh. In the beginning of the 15th century it was again burnt and plundered by some of Owain Glyndwr's followers; and since that period it has suffered dreadfully from three extensive conflagrations. In 1542, two long streets were consumed; two years afterwards there was a fire even more destructive than this, and in 1567, two hundred houses were burnt to the ground in only two hours, namely, between two and four in the morning. Considering the tumultuous state of that part of the country, it is but fair to infer, that these latter calamities were the premeditated work of some of the Welsh freebooters.

There are few places more interesting in a retrospective point of view, than the town of Oswestry. The associations connected with it are, indeed, deeply imbued with blood and slaughter; but its history would afford a faithful portrait—horrid and sanguinary though it be—of the state of Wales before its union with England. Even its very name arose from the ashes of a slaughtered prince. In the year 642 a battle was fought near the town (then called Maeserfield) by Oswald, the brave and generous king of Northumberland, and Penda, the ferocious monarch of Mercia. Oswald was defeated, and fell in the field of battle, and Penda, with blood-thirsty barbarity, fixed his mangled limbs on stakes*, as so many trophies of his victory:—

* In Number 1961 of the Harleian MSS. in the British Museum, is the following note:—"There was an old oake lately standing in Maesburie,

Cujus et abscissum caput abscissosque lacertos,
 Et tribus affixos palis pendere cruentos
Penda jubet: per quod reliquis exempta relinquat
 Terroris manifesta sui, Regemque beatum
 Esse probet miserum; sed causam fallit utramque,
 Ultor enim fratris minimè timet Oswinsillum,
 Immo timere facit, nec rex miser, immo beatus
 Est, qui fonte boni fruitur semel et sine fine.

Thus the place was called *Oswaldstre*, or Oswald's Town*,
 and subsequently Oswestry. ©.

[*To be continued.*]

ANTHOLOGIANA.—No. I.

UNDER this title we design occasionally to introduce a selection of poetical phrases out of the works of our early bards, for the purpose of presenting to the reader, not so much passages of general poetical merit, as those detached and isolated beauties of expression, which are found, more or less, to characterize the poetry of all countries; and that of Wales possesses many peculiarities in this point of view. If, indeed, it does not glow with all the richness of oriental imagery, it still

within the parish of Oswestrie, whereon one of king Oswald's arms hung, say the neighbours by tradition."

* *Tre*, or *trev*, in Welsh, signifies a *town*. [Our Correspondent appears to be under a slight mistake in considering the terminal syllable of *Oswaldstre* to be a corruption of the Welsh *trev*: the fact is, that the place is traditionally presumed to derive its name from the event alluded to in the preceding note, and was therefore called *Oswald's Tree*, of which the Welsh name, *Croes Oswallt*, is a literal version, with reference to the purpose for which the tree in question is said to have been used. But it is here proper to mention, that the Welsh accounts are at variance with this tradition; for, according to them, Oswestry owed its original name to Oswael, one of the sons of Cunedda Wledig, a Cumbrian prince of the fourth century, to whom, upon the flight of his family from the North, a considerable territory was allotted in this neighbourhood. And, with respect to the death of Oswald, above mentioned, it is recorded by Bede and other writers, to have taken place at Maserfeld, in Northumberland, and not near Oswestry, according to our correspondent's statement, which, however, is supported by other authorities. How to reconcile these conflicting accounts we know not, and can only, with all due humility, observe with the poet—*non nostrum tantas componere lites*.—ED.]